

# TEAM SELECTION PROCESS

As with most club sports, teams are selected on primarily on performance as this gives everyone the opportunity to compete at the highest level. When our club competes at a competition we are all in the same team and must support each other when competing. Cheering one of our teams in a heat or final can provide as much excitement as racing.

## 1. Nominations

Numbers of dogs per team will depend on the dogs available for the competition. To be eligible for selection, you must be a financial member of the AFA and the dog must have a valid CRN<sup>1</sup>. The handler must notify the Team Selection Panel in writing via email to [teamselection@yahoogroups.com](mailto:teamselection@yahoogroups.com) that they are available and wish to nominate for the Competition. Competition fees must be paid in full to the club treasurer by the closing date for nominations by enclosing the cash fees in a sealed envelope with the handler and dog names and CRN written on the front. The date for closing of nominations for each competition is indicated in the calendar on the Awesome Pawsome web-site and by email from the Club secretary. Any nominations received after the closing date will be considered by the Team Selection Panel only after all eligible and timely nominations have been considered. Any nominations received without having paid their competition fees will be deemed a late nomination. Late nominations are not guaranteed selection into a team.

## 2. Attendance

Dogs to be considered for team selection must have attended two training sessions in the five weeks prior to the nomination closing date, and attend at least half the training sessions in the lead up to the competition after provisional teams are announced. It is also expected that a handler has attended a flyball competition to observe and assist before the first competition they compete with a dog. Final decisions on the basis of attendance are at the discretion of the Team Selection panel. As a special case, the Selection panel will consider exceptions for new members, and for existing members who provide notification to the Head Coaches (in writing) of their inability to attend training before their absence. The Head Coaches can be contacted on [APHeadCoach@yahoogroups.com](mailto:APHeadCoach@yahoogroups.com)

## 3. Schedule

Provisional team selection will take place at least three weeks before a competition to give teams time to prepare for competition and train as a team.

## 4. Team Selection Panel

Membership of the Team Selection Panel is decided by the Awesome Pawsome's Management committee, and is made public on the Awesome Pawsome web-site. In 2010, the Team Selection Panel consists of the Head Coaches (Brian Moore and Jo Parkes), President (Jo Slade) and Vice President (Kerry Lovell).

## 5. Team Captain

The Team Captain plays a critical role during a flyball competition and has a variety of responsibilities. The Team Selection Panel will ask a club member with racing experience to captain each team at a competition. Sometimes a Vice Captain may also be appointed if duties are preferred to be shared. The person acting as Team Captain may or may not be racing a dog with the team they are leading. If you are interested in being a Team Captain or Vice Captain, and would like more information, please notify a member of the Team Selection Panel.

## 6. Fitness

Dogs, which in the committee's opinion are unfit, injured or recovering from injury might not be considered for selection.

## 7. Statistics from previous competitions

Information on speed and reliability gathered at competitions will be taken into consideration for team selections. When attending competitions, it is the Team Captain's responsibility to ensure your team's

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<sup>1</sup> The process of applying for a CRN may take 4-6 weeks. New members are approved by the AFA at a meeting that usually takes place the first Monday of the month (so application forms need to be completed a week or two before this date). AFA membership expires 30 June each year so members should be aware of this particularly for competitions held in July. See the AFA website for details.

time sheets are checked after each race and signed at the conclusion of each competition. They also need to ensure statistics sheets are completed if at all possible (the statistics information is also used for the issue of end of the year Club Awards).

#### 8. Feedback on Team Selection Panel's Decision and Team Selection Process

Teams are selected primarily on performance.<sup>2</sup> The handler's contribution to the club, racing experience and overall contribution to the sport of Flyball may also be considered (examples of contributions include judging, captain duties, time-keeping, recording statistics, club volunteer and promotional work). The Team Selection Panel's decision is final. If you are unhappy with the decision or selection process, or want to improve your selection chances at the next competition it is recommended you make a written submission to the Team Selection Panel to air your concerns, and ask for feedback. Members with a valid reason for removing their dog from a team may make application to the Team Selection Panel and this application will be considered. Only written submissions addressed to the Team Selection Panel will be addressed – no other channels of communication will be used. The Team Selection Panel can be contacted at [teamselection@yahoo.com](mailto:teamselection@yahoo.com)

9. All dogs entered for any competition will be classified as either:

"Learner Dog"

"Provisional Dog"

"Racing Dog"

"Reserve Racing Dog"

"Limited Racing Dog"

All dogs' classifications will be so identified in the notified teams for the competition.

The objective of the Learner and Provisional classification is to introduce club dogs into competitive racing in a manner most likely to encourage reliability, confidence and performance for both dog and handler. The Handler Nominated Reserve dog classification allows a handler to nominate a dog that will normally be at the Competition but not entered for racing as a reserve if anything happens to a selected dog before the Competition starts.

#### Definitions

"Learner Dogs"

A learner dog will normally be one just starting its racing career or returning to competition after overcoming a significant behaviour problem. The classification of dogs as 'learners' is a decision of the Head Coach/es.

Learner dogs are required to pay a reduced competition entry fee of \$5. As a team member, Learner dogs will share any prizes won by their team.

Learner dogs will be placed into an appropriate team by the Team Selection Panel and where possible will form part of a 6 dog team.

Where there is more than one learner dog entered for any competition and there are insufficient places available in teams to accommodate all nominated learners then the Team Selection Panel will eliminate learners based on assessment of their current racing nearness i.e. which dog is assessed as being closest to P standard and not on the duration of their L status. In considering this matter the selectors will consult with the Head Coach/es but the final selection decision is up to the Selection Panel.

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<sup>2</sup> Performance is a combination of speed and reliability e.g. If one dog runs an average of 5.5 seconds but fails to complete the course 30% of the time it would be possible to place a dog running an average of 6 seconds in a front of the faster dog if it only failed to complete the course 5% of the time.

Learner dogs will be given the opportunity to do restrained recalls and if possible full runs during the team warmup period. (Note—the height of the learner dog may influence the capability of the dog to do recalls and runs at warmup and the selectors will attempt to take this into consideration when allocating learner dogs to teams.)

Where a learner dog is demonstrating reliability in warmup runs the Team Captain should consider whether there is an opportunity to give the dog a full competition run in any circumstance where this would not impact on team performance (i.e. If a meaningless heat situation arises). The overall Policy position is however that learner dogs are not entitled to full competition runs unless such circumstances allow.

#### "Provisional Dogs"

A provisional dog is normally either a new dog at the start of its racing career or one returning to competition after remedial training for a racing problem. A dog may be classified as a provisional dog without first having been classified as a learner dog. The Head Coach/es will take into account factors such as performance at training and at demonstrations in making classifications. Provisional dogs will be placed into an appropriate team by the selectors taking into account factors such as the reliability and temperament of the other team dogs and the reasonable seeding compatibility of the provisional dog. Where possible teams with a provisional dog will be 6 dog teams. Provisional dogs pay full competition entry fees.

Team Captains will have a responsibility to advise, encourage and consult with the handler of a provisional dog in the event that the dog is displaying any behaviour problems. The Team Captain however has final responsibility for determining how much racing the provisional dog should perform in such cases (in making these determinations the Captain and the handler need to recognize that our objective is to produce reliable racing dogs and that repetitive errors in a racing environment are not a positive reinforcement of behaviour).

#### "Racing Dogs"

A racing dog is one deemed to be of sufficient experience and performance to form part of a reliable racing team. Racing dogs will be placed into teams by selectors based on the Team Selection Policy.

#### "Reserve Racing Dogs"

Team selections are provisional and may be changed until the competition has begun (as per AFA regulations). In light of this, if there are more nominations than team positions available, handlers and their dogs who have not made it into a team may be given the option to be named as a Reserve Racing dog. Reserve Racing dogs are not official team members, but will be expected to train with the team in the weeks leading up to the competition. In the case of illness, injury or other unforeseen circumstances, a reserve dog may be made into a team member before the competition begins.

#### "Limited Racing Dog"

A Limited Racing dog is one nominated as such by the handler at time of entry, signifying that the handler does not want the dog to race as a full, active member of the team. These could be dogs approaching retirement or coming back from an injury. The extent of racing that the dog is allocated is a matter for discussion between the handler and the team captain.

#### 10. Good Sportsmanship on racing day

A racing team can be comprised of four to six dogs and their handlers. However, in any one heat only four dogs are allowed to race. When competing in a competition, the Team Captain decides which dogs will race and the racing order in a particular heat. The Team captain may consider many factors when determining team members for a particular heat, including dog strengths and weaknesses, emergent problems, strategies to compete against various teams, as well as trying to fairly distribute racing time between all racing team members. The Team Captain's decision is final. In the interest of good sportsmanship, team members must not protest about their Team Captain's decisions at the competition. The Team Captain's job can be extremely stressful and team members should support their Team Captain and their decisions on the day.

Any concerns regarding the team selections on racing day, or displays of poor sportsmanship during a competition that are not able to be resolved by discussion with the Team Captain after the competition, should be put in writing to the Team Selection Panel so they can be discussed at the next Team Selection Panel meeting. Please also feel welcome to submit positive comments about a Team Captain, or shows of good sportsmanship.

Failure to respect the Team Captain's decisions or displays of poor sportsmanship can mean that a member may not be considered for future competitions.